

November 20, 2007

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 20, 2007

A Joint Work Session of the Hopewell School Board and the City Council of the City of Hopewell, Virginia, was held Tuesday, November 20, 2007, at 5:50 PM in the Training Room, School Board Building, 103 North 12th Street, Hopewell, Virginia.

PRESENT: Steven R. Taylor, Mayor
Christina J. Luman-Bailey, Councilor
Curtis W. Harris, Councilor
Kenneth B. Emerson, Councilor
E. Randy Sealey, Councilor
N. Gregory Cuffey, Councilor

Edwin C. Daley, City Manager
Ann M. Romano, City Clerk
Edwin N. Wilmot, City Attorney

ABSENT: Brenda S. Pelham, Vice Mayor

ALSO PRESENT: Avon Miles, Chair of the School Board
Ann Williams, Vice Chair of the School Board
Ronald Caricofe, Board Member
Juanita Chambers, Board Member
William C. Henry, Board Member

Winston O. Odom, Superintendent
Ray Watson, Assistant Superintendent for Administration

Chairman Miles called the meeting to order at 5:50 PM. Roll call was taken as follows:

Chairman Miles	-	present
Vice Chair Williams	-	present
Board Member Caricofe	-	present
Board Member Chambers	-	present
Board Member Henry	-	present

Immediately following the School Board's roll call, Mayor Taylor opened the meeting. Roll call was taken as follows:

Mayor Taylor	-	present
Vice Mayor Pelham	-	ABSENT
Councilor Bailey	-	present
Councilor Harris	-	present
Councilor Emerson	-	present
Councilor Sealey	-	present
Councilor Cuffey	-	present

Motion was made by Mrs. Chambers and seconded by Mrs. Williams to adopt the School Board Agenda. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Chairman Miles	-	yes
----------------	---	-----

November 20, 2007

Vice Chair Williams	-	yes
Board Member Caricofe	-	yes
Board Member Chambers	-	yes
Board Member Henry	-	yes

PRAYER and MEAL

Rev. Curtis W. Harris offered the blessing followed by serving the dinner meal. The meeting resumed at 6:20 PM.

SCHOOL BOARD CAPITAL PROJECTS

Dr. Odom welcomed everyone to the budget discussions. Every spring the School Board goes over the budget process. They were very successful last year with the City fully funding their requests. He encouraged Council to ask the School Board questions. Capital Improvement Projects were submitted to City Administration.

Capital Projects Estimates

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| ▪ High School Renovation and Athletic Facilities | \$16,616,000 |
| ▪ Additions for BRAC growth | \$13,000,000 |
| ◦ three or four schools | |
| ▪ HVAC Replacements and Other Capital Repairs | \$ 2,981,600 |

Expansion for Growth

- Patrick Copeland Elementary School was designed to allow for the addition of two new “pods.”
- Harry E. James Elementary School could be expanded on the back side of the building.
- Carter G. Woodson Middle School could be expanded on the back side without disrupting the bus parking lot.
- The High School could be expanded by in-filling in the court yard.

Other Capital Projects

- There are numerous HVAC units that are well beyond the usual lifetime for that type of equipment. The School Board keeps them working, but the time is approaching when they will be beyond repair.
- The membrane roof at Harry E. James is out of warranty and is developing some leaks. It will need replacement in the near future.

FUNDING

- The High School Project will definitely qualify for \$7.5 million in Literary Loan Funding at a 2% interest rate.
- The remaining \$9,116,000 of the estimate would qualify for VPSA loans at an estimated interest rate of 4 to 5.5% rate.
- While there are sources for this funding, there are two overriding factors:
 - The City’s current self-imposed limit on debt capacity; and
 - The revenue stream to make the debt service payments.

Cost of Delay

If the student population grows due to BRAC or any other factor, the School System will be obligated to educate the children residing in Hopewell. They are concerned with where they will put the additional students.

In order to continue their success, it is going to require greater financial support and a stronger commitment to meet the rising challenges.

FY 2009 BUDGET DISCUSSION

The FY 2008 Budget Process identified approximately 8.3 million dollars in non-capital needs that would have addressed current and future priorities.

According to Section 22.1-92 of the Code of Virginia, the division superintendent *shall prepare an estimate of the moneys needed for the support of the public schools of the school division.*

Hopewell Public Schools 2008-2013 Comprehensive Long-Range Plan

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Hopewell City Public Schools is to develop students who achieve at their highest level of ability in pursuing life and career choices that will enable them to become productive and contributing members of the community society.

MISSIONS STATEMENT I

- ☐ Keep student learning and instruction as the primary focus in preparation for participation in a global society.
 - Goal A: Exceed Standards
 - Goal B: Essential Academic, Artistic, and Emotional/Social Skills of Students
 - Goal C: Critical thinking Skills
 - Goal D: Career and technical Education Courses
 - Goal E: After-School and Summer Program

MISSION STATEMENT II

- ☐ Recruit, Develop and Energize a Corps of Quality Professionals
 - Goal A: Leading School Districts Salaries in Area
 - Goal B: Effective Retention and Motivational Incentives
 - Goal C: Teacher Cadet Program
 - Goal D: Teacher Recruitment Corp
 - Goal E: Core Area Graduate Courses, Tuition Reimbursements, and On-Site Master's Programs
 - Goal F: National Board Certification
 - Goal G: Professional Development

MISSION STATEMENT III

- ☐ State-of-the-Art Technological Environment that Promotes Instruction and Administration in an Engaged Learning Community.
 - Goal A: Access to Technology for all Students.
 - Goal B: Technology Training for all users.
 - Goal C: Technology Infrastructure that Facilitates Student and Staff Access.
 - Goal D: Career and Technical Proficiencies Needed in a Global Society.

MISSION STATEMENT IV

- ☐ Trusting, Mutual Relationships with Parents and Community That Result in Student Achievement Gains
 - Goal A: Partnership with Community Agencies/Businesses to Promote Career/Technical Programs and Employment Opportunities
 - Goal B: Parent/Community Action Center

MISSION STATEMENT V

- ☐ Student Enrollment as a Result of BRAC and Other Community Factors
 - Goal A: Open Communication with Fort Lee Officials and Hopewell City Officials that Facilitate BRAC Transition
 - Goal B: Funding Sources for School Expansion
 - Goal C: Special Education Issues
 - Goal D: Five-Year Capital Improvement Master Plan

PRE-K PALS DATA REPORT FALL 2007				
SCHOOL	# K	#WOODLAWN	# MET	% PASS
DuPont	111	45	40	88%
Harry E. James	110	64	53	83%
Patrick Copeland	111	38	33	87%
Total	332	147	126/WL	44%

Presentation by Ray Watson

All Hopewell elementary schools are full. There are more than 22 students per class in two schools. The average class size is 18-22. Patrick Copeland cannot have more than 23 children in Kindergarten through grade 3. Harry E. James and DuPont cannot have more than 22. Research indicates that a size of 14 is optimal; but realistically it is 22. These conditions are before BRAC even arrives. There have been discussions about the high school renovations for at least six years.

Regarding payment per year on the \$16 million, about \$100,000 per million. According to Mr. Hager, Finance Director, over the next five years consideration must be given to how many other payments would be dropping off. In 2009 the city will have to start servicing the \$20 million debt. Debt service today will be able to go out and keep as a flat line without additional dollars, and without taking on additional debt. Consideration must be sought outside of our current revenue stream; revenue is needed to dedicate to this. The dollars will not be there. Renovation of the high school will provide for approximately 100-150 more students; 10% growth.

November 20, 2007

The high school renovation will cost approximately \$15 million, to include work on the soccer fields, baseball fields and dug outs. They would not be doing: (1) large addition to the high school foyer to the gym, nor (2) removing football field off of Merner Field.

They will need the money for the whole project. The high school cannot be shut down, and will have to be a phased project. It might take two to three years. The building is structurally sound to the best of their knowledge. If they went to a second floor, it would need an engineering study first.

DISCUSSION: A whole new high school would cost approximately \$85-100 million and an adequate space would have to be located. Debt service of \$8 million would be required for a new high school. One of the things that must be considered is that it must take some initiative. The high school is 40 years old and it is crumbling. Something needs to be done very soon. If a new one cannot be built, the existing one must be renovated. The roof leaks, the windows continue to open in the wind, rain continues to pour into the building, and the walls are deteriorating. The windows must be repaired along the whole front of the building. The situation is very serious. The best learning environment possible must be provided for our students. That school was built on a junior high school plan. More students can be accommodated; it is not conducive to learning. If a public hearing were held in the spring, the School Board feels that they could turn out the people to support it.

Two million dollars of debt service is a tax increase of two cents (2¢). Fourteen cents (14¢) is \$17 million. That would put the city over the 5% limit. We must consider the growth at Ft. Lee. Going to trailers is not an option. Council needs to discuss this, perhaps at its Advance.

Expert information is needed on what should be done and how it can be phased in. The Literary Loan at 7.5% would count against us. That is 7.5% on any one project, with a \$20 million total. Mr. Watson will have that information back to Council by January 2008.

CITY CAPITAL NEEDS

Dr. Daley made the presentation on behalf of the City.

Preliminary 2008-09 Budget Estimate Priority Expenditures

Retiree Health Ins.	\$1,160,000
4% Salary Increase	450,000
Human Services Building	200,000
5 Police Officers	375,000
5 Firefighters	375,000
Director of Risk Management	80,000
Parks Renovations	50,000
Street Paving	500,000
Public Works Generator	65,000
Street Sweeper	160,000
I T Network System	100,000
MDTs - Police	250,000
Curbside Recycling	100,000
	<u>\$3,865,000</u>
Less Revenues	\$561,700
Shortfall	\$3,303,300

- The largest figures for the city are the \$20 million bond and retiree health insurance. The city will have to put money aside in the future for those purposes. If we do not do this we will be out of the bond business all together. The City Manager may ask Council to set up a different retiree program for *future* employees that will not affect present employees or present retired employees.
- Human Services will need \$200,000 annually to upkeep. It will require \$3 million cash, then financing.
- Create a Park Renovation Fund to do one park each year.
- Under the current budget system, \$100,000 per year is set aside to maintain the current IT (Information Technology) System. The current budget year Council reduced that to \$50,000. The original budget was \$3.2 million. Everything now continually roles. Every five years equipment is replaced.
- MDT - Every two years equipment is updated. The city could possibly use grants. They will require replacement also. There was mention of Lodging and Meals Tax. Those monies are not considered here. They are not adequate now so we are dipping into reserves. That fund is not self sustaining as it is.

There was discussion of ways that the School System and the City could better save money, i.e., health insurance. There is the opportunity potentially and it could be explored, possibly with self-insurance. Bargaining power could possibly be increased by merging the two groups together; pool resources. Dr. Daley and Dr. Odom have discussed other options. Perhaps the IT Departments could be merged and eliminate some positions; join operations and facilities. They do not always save money but may be more effective. For many years the city has reduced Risk Management. We must be cautious about eliminating positions. There are some common functions between the school system and the city. The City Manager and the Superintendent will explore the issue. Consider also that the city and schools could share a grant writer that would benefit both.

CITY REVENUE PROJECTIONS

Preliminary 2008-09 Budget Estimate			
	Revenues		
	2007-08	2008-09	Difference
Property Taxes	\$11,675,000	\$11,752,000	\$77,000
Public Service	3,266,000	4,160,000	894,000
Personal Property	3,950,000	3,900,000	-50,000
Machinery/Tools	4,371,000	4,090,500	-280,500
Penalty/Interest	700,000	700,000	0
	\$23,962,000	\$24,602,500	\$640,500
 Sales Tax	 \$1,908,500	 \$2,008,800	 \$100,300
Utility Tax	1,343,000	1,464,000	121,000
Business License	1,515,000	1,572,000	57,000
Franchise/Banks	331,200	330,000	-1,200
Motor Vehicles	391,000	390,000	-1,000
Recordation/Wills	230,400	250,000	19,600
	\$5,719,100	\$6,014,800	\$295,700
 Use of \$, Property	 \$500,000	 \$500,000	 0
 Total	 \$30,181,100	 \$31,117,300	 \$936,200

November 20, 2007

Schools - 40% =	\$374,480 =	\$374,500
City - 60 % =	\$561,720 =	\$561,700

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Dr. Odom discussed the Head Start program, reading, Special Education, Reading - Writing - Speaking! Teacher Retention. Only 20% of Hopewell school teachers live in Hopewell. There is a lack of high quality housing in Hopewell. Hopewell needs good quality apartments. There is a federal program to give incentives to teachers and law enforcement employees to afford homes. There are ways to entice teachers to come here and stay here. Activities in the schools are fearful to the teachers and that may be why they move away from Hopewell. *(Dr. Odom indicated that according to their exit interviews, that is not the case. There is a very positive learning environment.)*

There was discussion about complaints that the high school students are not prepared for college. Dr. Odom asked that those individuals come forward to talk to him, to look at the schools. He is very much open to conversation. He is seeking their support to making it better. Enrichment programs have recently been added.

Dr. Daley had the opportunity to go into the schools with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program and he was amazed at how well behaved the students are. The Hopewell High School students' complaint is that the halls are too crowded. They say that they are feeling safe in their school and in the middle school. Dr. Daley was impressed by the enthusiasm of the faculty.

Mr. Caricofe was at a meeting at the high school yesterday and took Mrs. Collins (*who attended this Work Session*) on a tour. She reported that she was very impressed.

Mayor Taylor mentioned a recent article in the Hopewell News and asked what the measuring mechanism was - what was that bench mark? The SOLs and the state bench marks. Hopewell exceeds in Special Ed, free and reduced lunch, and African/American students. Hopewell has been recognized by the state. When comparing school systems, you must compare the types of students attending those schools. We need to publicize our programs: AYPs - SOLs. Public Relations! City and schools must work together. How do we share this information with the localities that they are coming from? Army regulations must do in-processing with liaison (Mrs. Collins). There are six weeks between the time they receive their orders and the time they arrive here (Ft. Lee). Mrs. Collins indicated that there is a large number of E-5 and E-6 with dependents. They are looking for \$150,000-180,000 range housing; accredited schools, and \$160,000 income.

Dr. Odom indicated that the city has an image problem, a stigma. The four writers of the recent article in the Hopewell News will be invited to attend a School Board meeting. There will be an opportunity to gain the ambassadorship of four young men for Hopewell.

Several years ago the Commonwealth School Board picked the school system that they thought was one of the best. It was the Highly Distinguished Award. There are 132 school districts in the state. Hopewell was recognized for that award.

The city's website will have a re-location section and will have the successes of the school district and housing, park facilities, etc. It will be in a digital format, in business card size. It needs to happen now! The schools have been working on a link on their web site. Mr. Miles stressed the importance of marketing business; get teachers to live here. Many teachers who work here bring their children to school here. We must be ahead of other districts to attract and retain teachers.

November 20, 2007

ADJOURN

At 8:30 PM **motion** was made by Councilor Emerson, and seconded by Councilor Cuffey, to adjourn the meeting. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Councilor Emerson	-	yes
Councilor Sealey	-	yes
Mayor Taylor	-	yes
Councilor Cuffey	-	yes
Councilor Bailey	-	yes
Councilor Harris	-	yes

Motion was made by Board Member Caricofe, and seconded by Board Member Henry, to adjourn the meeting. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Chairman Miles	-	yes
Vice Chair Williams	-	yes
Board Member Caricofe	-	yes
Board Member Chambers	-	yes
Board Member Henry	-	yes

Steven R. Taylor, Mayor

Ann M. Romano, City Clerk